



General Assembly

Seventy-first session

77th plenary meeting
Thursday, 20 April 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Thomson (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Zamora Rivas (El Salvador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 19 and 73 (continued)

Sustainable development

Oceans and the law of the sea

(a) Oceans and the law of the sea

Draft decision (A/71/L.62)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly will first take a decision on draft decision A/71/L.62, entitled "Accreditation and participation of intergovernmental organizations in the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision A/71/L.62?

Draft decision A/71/L.62 was adopted (decision 71/552).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 19 and sub-item (a) of agenda item 73.

Agenda items 29, 61 and 110

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/71/768)

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/71/792)

The Acting President: I now have the honour to deliver a statement, in English, on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, who is unable to attend today's meeting owing to commitments at the World Bank spring meeting in Washington, D.C.

"In April 2016, just shy of one year ago, the General Assembly and Security Council adopted groundbreaking parallel resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively). The resolutions on sustaining peace are a comprehensive statement on the role of the United Nations in peacebuilding and prevention, connecting our efforts on peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. They call for the dissolution of silos and the advancement of a strongly integrated approach, and place sustaining peace at the core of United Nations actions. The vital role of women and young people in building and sustaining peace is underscored throughout. Sustaining peace underlines the 'comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred' vision of the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the connections between the goals for sustaining

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peace and the Sustainable Development Goals are highlighted in both resolutions, which recognize that 'development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing'.

"On 24 January, I convened a high-level dialogue on building sustainable peace for all. That meeting focused on the synergies between sustainable development and sustaining peace, and on sub-themes relating to gender equality and youth, natural resources and inclusive and accountable institutions. Member States soundly and broadly affirmed the mutually reinforcing relationship between the two, noting that the best means of prevention and of sustaining peace is inclusive and sustainable development and, of course, that sustainable development cannot be achieved in the absence of the conditions necessary for sustainable peace.

"The resolutions on sustaining peace also recognize the importance of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in serving as a bridge between the principal organs and relevant entities of the United Nations and as a platform for convening all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations. The PBC is empowered to be more effective, flexible and innovative. Today we welcome its annual report (A/71/768). The Commission has taken significant steps in the implementation of the resolutions on sustaining peace. I welcome the improved PBC working methods, as encouraged by those resolutions, from which has emerged a more flexible platform, available to all countries seeking sustained international attention and support to their sustaining peace efforts. I also welcome the PBC's ongoing efforts to strengthen its synergies with principal organs, including by enhancing its advisory role to the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. That was a key objective of my January event, at which the Secretary-General, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, the then-President of the Security Council and the President of the Economic and Social Council joined me in addressing Member States.

"This morning I also welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/71/792), and its commitment to providing catalytic, rapid-response and flexible support to sustaining peace. In 2016, the Secretary-General's

Peacebuilding Fund approved \$70.9 million for 17 countries that are integrating United Nations strategies in support of sustaining peace. I am pleased to note that the Fund has exceeded the United Nations-wide commitment to allocating at least 15 per cent of resources to women's empowerment, by reaching 20 per cent of its total investments in that area. Against those achievements, I note that the resolutions on sustaining peace call on the Secretary-General to provide options for securing adequate, sustainable financing for peacebuilding in his upcoming report on sustaining peace in 2018. That matter will be considered further during the Assembly's seventy-second session as we work together to address the urgent need to invest in prevention and in creating the conditions required to sustain peace."

(spoke in Spanish)

I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya in his capacity as former Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Kamau (Kenya): It is a great pleasure to be here today to present the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on its tenth session (A/71/768). I would like to congratulate the Chair of the PBC at its eleventh session, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, for the dextrous manner with which he has continued to steer the affairs of the Commission, and to all members of the PBC for their continued commitment to the work of the Commission.

The report before us reflects policy and country-specific activities that the Commission conducted in 2016, a year that was marked by the adoption of the twin resolutions 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of the Peacebuilding Architecture. In addition to reaffirming the critical role of the Peacebuilding Commission, the resolutions introduce the concept of "sustaining peace", which, *inter alia*, emphasizes conflict prevention, the primacy of politics, national ownership and inclusiveness and reaffirms the important role of women and youth in peacebuilding efforts.

The tenth session marked a very productive year for the Commission, as it built on the momentum generated by the twin resolutions to further improve the relevance, effectiveness and flexibility of the Commission. And today I wish to highlight four areas covered in the

annual report that underscore the progress made during the tenth session.

First, on flexibility, with the consent of all concerned countries, the Commission convened a range of country-specific regional and thematic discussions beyond the six country-configuration formulas with which the PBC is currently engaged. The PBC continued its consideration of peacebuilding opportunities and challenges in West Africa, including the Chair's visit to the region to explore the subregional peacebuilding opportunities and challenges following the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic. Throughout that, the Commission provided an important platform for improving coherence among different stakeholders and at the same time for addressing cross-border and subregional challenges. The Chair also engaged the African Union Peace and Security Council on issues of mutual interest and potential areas for future cooperation, as required by the twin resolutions.

The Commission started the work of the Peacebuilding Fund, which made it possible to convene, in October, a meeting to study the results of the Peacebuilding Fund engagement in Kyrgyzstan with senior representatives of the Kyrgyz Government. This provided an opportunity for the country to discuss the progress made in reconciliation and peacebuilding, thanks to the support of the Peacebuilding Fund. Activities such as these represent important ways to further strengthen the strategies between the PBC and the Fund.

Secondly, on deeper partnerships and more coherence, we focused on the importance of regional and subregional organizations as key partners in peacebuilding efforts. The involvement of senior representatives of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Development Programme further enriched our discussions. It was a good step forward in the Commission's efforts to enhance coherence within the United Nations system around matters of peacebuilding. Throughout the tenth session, the Commission also made important progress in building stronger relations with international financial institutions, regional and subregional organizations, particularly the African Union, and the entire United Nations system. I urge the Commission to continue in that direction and look for other opportunities to strengthen its collaboration with civil society and the private sector.

Thirdly, with respect to financing for peacebuilding, the United Nations has a unique tool at its disposal for supporting conflict-affected countries and preventing violent conflicts. The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund is an example of such a tool, and for it to be truly effective, the Peacebuilding Fund needs to work synergistically with the PBC, and the two entities' work must be mutually reinforcing. In this regard, during the tenth session, we had several opportunities to build on these very synergies. The meeting on financing for peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan, which I mentioned earlier, is only one example of how the Commission can draw attention to the work of the Peacebuilding Fund, and I invite other countries that are receiving funds from the Peacebuilding Fund to come forward and use the PBC as a platform to present their success stories.

I would like to stress the importance of investing in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Kenya, alongside Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sweden and the United Kingdom, organized a pledging conference for the Peacebuilding Fund. Although the total amount pledge fell short of our intended target of \$300 million, the conference was well received. The conference sent an important political statement to Member States and the United Nations that they should seek solutions for long-term financing for peacebuilding efforts. I am glad to note that under the chairmanship of the Republic of Korea the Commission is continuing in this effort by having the theme of this year's session be "Financing for peacebuilding".

Fourthly, on working methods, the Commission achieved important results with regard to formulating relevant reference documents to guide its work. In September 2016, the Peacebuilding Commission became the first intergovernmental body to adopt a gender strategy. The strategy, which is the outcome of a process initiated by my predecessor, is an important tool to help guide the work of the Commission on gender-related aspects of peacebuilding. It also reiterates the important role women have to play in peacebuilding and in sustaining peace. In an effort to make the Commission more effective and more efficient, it conducted a review of its rules of procedure and working methods during its tenth session. This was in line with requirements in the twin resolutions mentioned earlier.

Beyond these four points there is a lot more that the Commission did in 2016 in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including through its country-specific

activities, as indicated in the annual report before us. The value of the Peacebuilding Commission rests in its ability to engage with a broad range of stakeholders and partners to reinforce its bridging role among the principal organs and entities of the United Nations and provide advice to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council when and as requested. I believe that by strengthening its convening role and providing advice, the Commission can become truly effective and relevant in contributing to peacebuilding and the nexus of sustaining peace and sustaining development.

In its forward agenda, the annual report sets forth important priorities that the Commission will address in 2017. I am confident that, under the capable leadership of the Republic of Korea, the Peacebuilding Commission will continue to evolve in a positive manner.

Finally, I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Fernández-Taranco and his entire team at the Peacebuilding Support Office for their support to my delegation and to the entire PBC throughout the tenth session and their dedication to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

In conclusion, I would like to make a brief statement in my national capacity as the representative of Kenya. I commend the Secretary-General for prioritizing the prevention and sustaining of peace during his inaugural address to the Security Council (see S/PV.7857). I also commend President Thomson for convening an important and timely high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly under the theme "Building sustainable peace for all: synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustaining peace". We believe that it is an indicator that the Peacebuilding Commission agenda is in full alignment with the current vision of the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea in his capacity as Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea): Let me start by congratulating Ambassador Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya, on his strong leadership and the commitment with which he successfully led the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) as its Chair last year. He worked tirelessly to lay the grounds for a stronger PBC while also testing and spearheading a number of innovations. I am grateful to be able to count

on his support, as well as that of Ambassador Gómez Camacho, Permanent Representative of Mexico, as Vice-Chairs of the PBC this year.

This annual debate of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace is of particular importance since we will soon be celebrating the first anniversary of the adoption of resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, by the General Assembly and Security Council, respectively.

I agree with what has just been said by my predecessor, that the PBC has made significant achievements since last April. Indeed, the PBC has continued to bring attention to the importance of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. To mention just a few initiatives, in January the Chair of the Commission participated in a high-level event that President Thomson organized, under the theme "Building sustainable peace for all: synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustaining peace".

In March, the Commission met in response to a request from the Security Council to support the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel in advancing the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. At the request of the Gambian Government, the Commission convened a meeting just yesterday to discuss the peacebuilding priorities of the Gambia, following my visit to the country last March in my capacity as PBC Chair, which was joined by Assistant Secretary-General Fernández-Taranco of the Peacebuilding Support Office and Ambassador Tangara of the Gambia.

The resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, which recognized the unique role of the PBC in bringing steady international attention to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, have provided a timely opportunity to re-energize the Commission, improve its advisory role to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and, ultimately, enhance its support for countries that are striving to build and sustain peace. I intend to make the PBC more proactive in mainstreaming all peacebuilding and sustaining peace objectives and tasks throughout the work of the Commission and the United Nations system as a whole.

Looking ahead, there are a number of priorities for the Commission during its eleventh session, which I will briefly enumerate.

First of all, we must consider partnership. Partnerships and cooperation with relevant stakeholders, both within and outside the United Nations, are crucial. The Commission should seize all available opportunities to strengthen its collaboration, especially with international financial institutions, including the World Bank, and with regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union. We will continue to look at opportunities to engage with organizations from other regions, including Latin America and Asia. In addition, the Commission will further enhance its collaboration with civil-society organizations and the private sector. The annual session of the PBC, to be held on 22 June, will be an excellent opportunity to convene a broad range of actors and discuss practical ways in which we can work together.

Within the United Nations, we need to further explore ways to improve the quality of advice we provide to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. In recent months, the Security Council asked the PBC to advise it on a number of regional and country-specific issues, including the Sahel, the Central African Republic, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau. I believe that those are good opportunities for the Commission to prove that it can provide solid and comprehensive advice upon request from the principal organs of the United Nations.

Secondly, we need predictable financing. Financing represents a key element of peacebuilding, and we must ensure its predictability moving forward. That is why the Commission will focus its annual session in June on that important topic and discuss ways to ensure more predictable financing through stronger partnerships with other stakeholders, including international financial institutions and the private sector. In that regard, the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) cannot be overemphasized. Synergies between the Commission and the PBF are improving, and a number of countries that receive funds from the PBF have expressed interest in accessing the PBC as a platform to engage with the broader international community.

As preparations to issue the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace are under way, the PBC will be ready to provide a platform where the Secretariat can engage Member States and exchange views on a broad set of issues related to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including options on financing.

Thirdly, we must focus on gender. The Commission will continue to build on the achievements of the past year to promote the gender dimension of peacebuilding with a focus on the need to increase the participation of women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. To that end, in 2016 the Commission adopted a gender strategy that is now being integrated into the work of the PBC, and has recently appointed focal points on gender, as well as on youth, financing, institution-building and national ownership, to ensure that the PBC takes those themes into account throughout its activities.

Fourth and finally, with respect to transparency and efficiency, the Commission will continue to work towards more flexible working methods so that it can respond in a rapid and effective manner to an increasing number of requests for advice and support.

In conclusion, we look forward to a fruitful and productive discussion at today's annual debate of the General Assembly, which provides an important opportunity for the wider United Nations membership to reflect on an increasingly significant aspect of the renewed efforts of the United Nations to build and sustain peace across the globe.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Adamson (European Union): I speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

I thank you, Sir, for having convened today's debate revolving around the annual reports of the Peacebuilding Commission on its tenth session (A/71/768) and on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/71/792). This represents an excellent occasion to take stock of the achievements made over the past 12 months. I particularly thank Ambassador Kamau for his briefing.

The year 2016 marked an important milestone in the existence and work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations peace and security architecture as a whole. Almost one year ago, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted the identical resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively, on the

review of the peacebuilding architecture. They were the most comprehensive resolutions on peacebuilding that the United Nations has adopted so far. They clearly defined the concept of sustaining peace, acknowledging that it involves all stages of the cycle of conflict and should flow through all three pillars of the engagement of the United Nations. Peacebuilding should therefore no longer be seen as a post-conflict activity, as the challenge of sustaining peace runs across the complete cycle of our engagement.

Today, we are faced with a rising number of violent conflicts in the world. The failure to sustain peace is part of the reason we are faced with that challenge. In fact, 90 per cent of conflict onsets in the first decade of the twenty-first century took place in contexts that had experienced conflict before. Given that recurrent nature of violent conflict, sustaining peace equals conflict prevention in many cases. We therefore welcome the emphasis placed by the Secretary-General on conflict prevention, as well as the clear imperative for all of us to work as hard as we can, collectively, on finally getting prevention right — because we know that we have often failed on many fronts. The Secretary-General has said that trillions of dollars are spent destroying societies and economies. The human suffering we are currently witnessing is immense, and frankly, shameful.

It is therefore no longer a question of agreeing on the principle that prevention is better than firefighting and that sustaining efforts for peace reduces human and financial costs immensely in the long run. We know we must develop a political culture of acting sooner in response to the risk of violent conflict, and we must act together if we want to have any chance of success.

The European Union's new global strategy emphasizes the importance of acting promptly on prevention while also responding responsibly and decisively to crises, investing in stabilization and avoiding premature disengagement. It also emphasizes the importance of an integrated and comprehensive approach to conflict that starts with joint analysis; that brings to bear all the tools at our disposal to address conflict; that addresses the various interconnected levels of conflict; and that emphasizes the commitment of the EU to working through the multilateral system, with the United Nations at its core.

The global strategy promises that the EU will engage in a practical and principled way in sustaining peace, taking an integrated approach. Building on

its comprehensive approach and working in the same interconnected manner that is also embodied in the Sustainable Development Goals, the EU is stepping up efforts and capabilities to further strengthen the way we bring together institutions, expertise and instruments, and work with Member States on prevention, resolution and stabilization.

It is by now well established common knowledge that security and development are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The link permeates the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Building and sustaining peace is inescapably linked to inclusive development, resilience and human rights. Long-term structural policies are not a luxury in times of many crises. Peaceful and inclusive societies, good governance, the rule of law, an independent judiciary, a reliable police force and a public sector without corruption are the best guarantors of sustainable peace and sustainable development, providing people with the means to lead secure and fulfilling lives at home. Sustaining peace requires that human rights and fundamental freedoms be respected, protected and fulfilled.

We also need to develop more creative approaches to diplomacy. That includes the continued promotion of women's roles in peace efforts. Women indeed need to be at the forefront of creating and sustaining peace, from the local to the international levels, if we want to have any chance of succeeding. In that regard, we welcome the adoption by the PBC of its own gender strategy to help guide its work on gender-related issues of sustaining peace.

I turn now to the two annual reports before us today. Both are comprehensive documents, illustrating the complexity of peacebuilding challenges. We appreciate the efforts of the PBC Organizational Committee and the Peacebuilding Support Office to provide an assessment of the PBC's work in pursuing its forward agenda for 2015. The EU welcomes the wider focus of the PBC beyond the countries on its agenda, as well as the regional approach. We also welcome the work of the PBC in the implementation of the recommendations of the review of the peacebuilding architecture.

The EU has also been a full member of all country-specific configurations of the PBC since their inception and is trying to provide the best support possible for their success. There is a clear role for the PBC when it engages with countries that undergo a transition period.

The PBC is already working on ways to respond better to challenges identified by Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinators and other actors. In doing so, it can significantly contribute to the one United Nations vision.

Turning to the performance of the country-specific configurations over the past year, there is good progress to report. We commend the efforts of all configuration chairs. Nevertheless, many challenges remain to be tackled. This is particularly true for Burundi, where the dynamics continue on a downward spiral and illustrate the need for additional preventive measures, political attention and engagement to prevent a recurrence of violent conflict. Guinea-Bissau is also a case in point, with the continuing political stalemate increasing the risk of instability and socioeconomic deterioration in that country.

The Peacebuilding Fund has achieved significant results and continues to have an important catalytic role. It remains a small-scale strategic fund that has to be followed by longer-term commitments from other financing sources, which may be bilateral or multilateral, including multilateral and regional development banks. For its part, the EU has already engaged in joint funding for peacebuilding projects via our Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace and is open to exploring further opportunities for joint funding. With regard to securing more predictable financing for peacebuilding, the EU stands ready to discuss options on financing at the seventy-second session of the Assembly on the basis of the proposals to be made by the Secretary-General.

Before concluding, I would like to extend my gratitude to the former Chair of the PBC, Ambassador Kamau of Kenya, whom I would like to thank for his commitment and the excellent work he has done. We also look forward to continue working hand in hand with the current Chair, Ambassador Cho Tae-yul of the Republic of Korea, the entire PBC membership and the Peacebuilding Support Office to move things forward.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): I thank you, Sir, for convening this joint debate on the very important topic of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, as well as on the reports of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/71/768) and the Peacebuilding Fund (A/71/792).

I also thank the Secretary-General for his report on the peacebuilding fund, of which Sri Lanka is a close partner and a beneficiary. It is heartening to see

in the report that, despite concerns over funding levels, the Peacebuilding Fund has registered remarkable achievements during the past year.

We believe that the concept of sustaining peace should be at the core of our efforts at the United Nations to prevent conflicts and bring peace to the world. It encompasses all dimensions of prevention and peace, including conflict prevention, effective peacebuilding, addressing the root causes of conflict and ensuring non-recurrence. If we are to apply this concept in our efforts, it has the potential to help in saving precious human lives from the horrors of conflict and war in these challenging times. In short, sustaining peace is essentially about prevention.

Secretary-General António Guterres has said that "prevention is not merely a priority, but the priority". We fully subscribe to this view. If prevention is the priority, it is imperative that we commit ourselves to sustaining peace wholeheartedly. In this regard, we welcome the High-level Dialogue on Building Sustainable Peace for All, convened by the President of the General Assembly in January. The Dialogue gave useful insights into the synergies between the sustainable development agenda and sustaining peace. As was stressed by many speakers at that event, sustaining peace is not an alien concept imposed upon States, but an inclusive, people-centred, nationally driven and owned process. We too subscribe to this view.

As a country emerging from conflict, Sri Lanka is well poised to reflect on the enormous suffering that conflict brought about. This awareness has spurred us to commit ourselves to post-conflict peacebuilding and sustaining peace with utmost dedication. This is indeed the underlying rationale for our unrelenting support to the agenda for sustaining peace and joining the Group of Friends of Sustaining Peace, a growing group of countries that is committed to promoting that agenda.

The implementation of the concept of sustaining peace worldwide, in our view, will require a concerted and coordinated effort from the entire United Nations system, all Member States and other stakeholders. In short, the task of sustaining peace needs sustained international attention and assistance. In this regard, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that Sri Lanka has just pledged a contribution to the joint project of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the United Nations Office for Project Services, which aims at better

communicating the concept of sustaining peace among various stakeholders.

We strongly believe that measures to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict need a coherent, integrated and coordinated approach. The approach must be adopted by the entire United Nations system, Member States and other stakeholders. As we expounded during the High-Level Dialogue on sustainable peace in January, sustaining peace is also linked to development. Sustainable peace and sustainable development are inextricably linked and interdependent. We have recognized this and Sri Lanka's post-conflict reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts are consonant with our path to sustainable development.

The Government of Sri Lanka is very much committed to sustaining peace. Our efforts in post-conflict reconciliation are essentially aimed towards conflict prevention and building sustainable peace. We remain committed to preventing a relapse into conflict and building sustainable peace, notwithstanding certain challenges which arise in the milieu of democratic politics. The measures that we have identified to bring about post-conflict reconciliation consist of truth-seeking, justice, reparation and measures for guaranteeing non-recurrence. In this process, we are addressing the grievances of all victims, which remain at the core of these efforts.

Some of the key milestones in our efforts to usher in sustainable peace in Sri Lanka consists of an inclusive process to draw up a new constitution that would guarantee the rights of all Sri Lankans, the drawing up of a national human rights action plan and the passage of legislation to set up a permanent office for missing persons to bring about a sense of closure for those affected by the conflict. The report of the Consultation Task Force, which sought the views of the public on transitional justice mechanisms, is presently being studied to determine the appropriate mechanisms for truth-seeking, reparations, justice and non-recurrence. This exercise was supported by the funds provided by the Peacebuilding Fund.

The Office for National Unity and Reconciliation is working on a national policy on reconciliation. The Office is also working on reform of the education sector with a view to inculcating in our children the importance of pluralism, thereby contributing to national reconciliation. The Office is also providing

training to leaders of interfaith groups and clergy in peacebuilding in order to use them as early-warning mechanisms to defuse potential conflict situations. In these efforts, we are closely engaging with the Peacebuilding Support Office. It is imperative that the Peacebuilding Support Office be further strengthened to carry out the agenda for sustaining peace. I also appreciate the assistance extended by the Peacebuilding Fund to Sri Lanka's initial peacekeeping projects and for the Peacebuilding Priority Plan.

Since the declaration by the Secretary-General of Sri Lanka's eligibility to receive funds from the Peacebuilding Fund in 2015, the Fund's total commitment to Sri Lanka has amounted to \$12.3 million. Of this, \$7 million is being earmarked for the Peacebuilding Priority Plan.

Last year's resolution 70/262, on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, rightly identified the dire need for adequate, predictable and sustained financing for the United Nations peacebuilding efforts. As a beneficiary of the Peacebuilding Fund, we worked closely with the Peacebuilding Support Office to address the issue of the Fund being hampered by decreasing contributions. As was just mentioned by the former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Kamau, we co-hosted with several other States a donor pledging conference to refinance the Fund during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly last year.

The report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund reiterates that the agenda for sustaining peace compels a redoubling of effort on the part not only of the Fund, so as to ensure that its resources are used to greatest effect, but also of Member States, to ensure that they match their clear-cut political support for the Fund with adequate and sustainable financing. In this context, Sri Lanka stands fully behind the agenda for sustaining peace and would support all efforts of the United Nations to promote it.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (spoke in Arabic): This debate on the two annual reports of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/71/768) and on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/71/792) are different from those we have had in previous years. Indeed, the adoption of the two identical resolutions, General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), was a new start and an unprecedented development in terms of strengthening and coordinating United Nations

peacebuilding efforts. This is in fact a 10-year review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, focusing on various policies, factors and mechanisms of sustaining peace. This is a new approach that has allowed us to address emerging challenges and to see the links between sustaining peace, conflict resolution and sustainable development. It is in that context that we can apply the concept of sustaining peace.

My delegation would like to reiterate the following points.

First of all, we must continue our debates on establishing an understanding among all delegations of the term of "sustaining peace" and address any concerns that might exist regarding the use and the meaning of this term. It is therefore important to focus this debate on how that concept can be practically applied within the context of each conflict and in line with the national needs of each country. We must also keep in mind that there is no one-size-fits all solution that would apply to all conflicts.

Second, we must make use of all tools available to the United Nations to respond to crisis situations. We must do this using an approach that seeks solutions instead of just managing ongoing conflicts. We must also develop our tool kit for implementing and examining peacekeeping and preventative diplomacy mandates, as well as actions to strengthen institutions and national capacities. Such tools would help to ensure peace in the medium and long terms.

Third, along the same lines, it is important to develop the analytical capacity of the Secretariat so that it may respond to developments in various countries emerging from conflict. We believe that reform of the peacebuilding architecture should include a vision to strengthen the Secretariat. The United Nations must have this shared analytical capacity in order to be able to assess the various conflicts and the contexts of each. In that way, we can find solutions that are adapted to each unique situation. Such an analytical, flexible approach would allow us to strengthen the capacity of the Peacebuilding Commission, helping it to play its consultative role alongside the General Assembly and the Security Council, and to find the best ways to address each conflict.

Fourth, we must strengthen the regional approach in order to find comprehensive solutions to regional issues, in particular in the Sahel region in Africa. Developing influential partnerships with regional and

subregional organizations is absolutely essential if we want to take a strong regional approach to addressing transnational challenges. We should therefore assess and develop partnerships with the African Union and the League of Arab States.

Fifth, the Commission has adopted a gender strategy, which is an important step in the Commission's sectoral and conceptual work. The role of women is a crucial one. It strengthens inclusivity in building and sustaining peace. My delegation believes it is important to review the strategy after two or three years of its implementation in various contexts in order to draw lessons and improve its performance.

Sixth, building and sustaining peace in countries emerging from conflict should take place in parallel with the launch of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development plans. They all share the same goal of achieving justice, democracy and the rule of law in countries suffering from disease and famine, and where the foundation for a dignified life is lacking. That is why we insist on and reiterate the importance of the bridging role that the Commission plays between the various bodies.

Seventh and finally, predictable financing for sustaining peace remains a major challenge. Means of financing must be found. Such mechanisms should be based on broad partnerships between the United Nations, financial institutions and bilateral donors. Taking risks is the price to be paid for this valuable investment in building and sustaining peace. We see a major role in that regard for the Peacebuilding Fund and donors in finding the funds necessary to finance these efforts.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (spoke in French): I welcome the convening of this meeting, which will provide us with a dual opportunity to take stock of the activities of the peacebuilding architecture during the previous year through our consideration of the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/71/768), and to look ahead into the current year by identifying the aspects to be refined and the gaps to be filled in the framework of our actions within the Commission and the configurations.

I would like to congratulate Kenya on its successful chairmanship over the past year, which has resulted in a more than gratifying assessment, and to pay special tribute to my friend Ambassador Kamau, who led in a

way that was conducive to success and who has worthily represented the African continent.

I would like to assure the Chairman of the Commission, Ambassador Cho Tae-yul of the Republic of Korea, of my delegation's full support and cooperation for the success of his mandate.

The year 2016 was a pivotal one in the evolution of peacebuilding. Thanks to the contributions of Member States, a new concept, vision and dynamic have emerged of the consolidation of peace, a fundamental United Nations responsibility. Indeed, the emergence of the concept of lasting peace, which has become omnipresent in virtually all discussions and debates within the Organization, has contributed substantially to bringing a new dynamic to its work in terms of the constant search for lasting balance between three fundamental pillars: development, security and human rights.

In adopting resolution 70/262, Member States expressed their support for the key idea of adopting a comprehensive and holistic approach to conflict prevention in order to ensure lasting peace; addressing the lack of coherence in United Nations system peacebuilding activities; ensuring that peacebuilding processes are not linear and that they take into account the specificity of each country; demanding predictable, sustainable and adequate financial resources to deal with the root causes of conflicts; and strengthening United Nations collaboration with regional and subregional organizations, as well as with international financial institutions.

It has become evident to the international community that, after decades of effort and sacrifice to bring peace to the four corners of the globe, the great obstacle to achieving peace is precisely its inability to withstand tension and recurring destabilizing events. The work of the Commission, as so accurately reflected in the annual report (A/71/768) under consideration today, points to the share of the responsibility that United Nations actors bear in that state of affairs by denouncing the compartmentalization of the various bodies and the narrow prism through which peacebuilding has been perceived thus far.

The annual report rightly reflects the full scope of the Commission's activities, whether as a platform for advocating the causes of fragile countries and mobilizing the funds necessary for their recovery, or as an advisory body capable of providing valuable advice

and recommendations to key United Nations organs, not to mention the adoption of a gender strategy and good practices in terms of working methods.

Allow me to turn now to the situation in the Central African Republic and its Peacebuilding Commission country-specific configuration, which I have the honour to chair.

More than a year after President Faustin Archange Touadéra was elected following a peaceful electoral process, which was described as transparent and inclusive, much progress has been made, although the security situation remains volatile. Contrary to what we have seen in the past, the work of the Configuration is now based on a reference document, the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan 2017-2021, prepared by the Central African authorities in collaboration with the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank. This strategic document, on which the Brussels conference was based, has contributed to the success of the conference, at which pledges of more than \$2.2 billion out of the \$3 billion needed over five years were announced.

The configuration is trying to closely monitor the implementation of the recovery plan to encourage donors to pay for their commitments as soon as possible. The Brussels conference also saw the signing of another important document, the Cadre d'engagement, which governs relations between the Central African Republic and the international community. In that regard, the configuration will closely follow the evolution of the implementation of this important commitment mechanism.

This year, the configuration mobilized its support for the electoral process and the promotion of the recovery plan of the Brussels conference. More recently, on 16 March, the configuration organized a meeting attended by the President of the Central African Republic, His Excellency Mr. Faustin Archange Touadéra; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga; and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. El-Ghassim Wane. At the meeting, we approved the programme of work of the configuration to facilitate the implementation of the national plan for recovery and peace consolidation. The President of the Central African Republic had the opportunity to thank the members of the configuration and to describe his Government's peacebuilding

priorities in accordance with the national plan for recovery. He also stressed the importance of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security-sector reform processes, without which all efforts would be doomed to failure. In particular, he highlighted the political and financial challenges that threaten the implementation of these two processes.

On the occasion of the presence of the President of the Republic in New York, the United Kingdom presidency of the Security Council organized a debate on the Central African Republic (see S/PV.7901). On that occasion, I underscored the importance of cooperation and cohesion between the work of the Security Council and the Commission, stressing the role that the Commission can play in supporting the work of the Council. In that regard, we commend Egypt for its commitment as a focal point, as well as all the members of the Commission that are members of the Council and working to strengthen the relationship between the Commission and the Security Council. I intend to visit the Central African Republic soon, at the invitation of the President of the Republic, whom I thank. We are consulting with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the Peacebuilding Support Office to ensure that the dates of that mission are in line with the timetable of the Security Council.

Concerning the Peacebuilding Fund, we welcome the fact that the need to strengthen synergies between the Fund and the Commission has been highlighted in the annual report (A/71/792). Indeed, the Peacebuilding Fund, which is doing remarkable work in many countries, would benefit from greater communication about its projects. Further coordination with the country-specific configurations would strengthen the coherency of the Fund's efforts.

We welcome the fact that the activities of the Fund in the Central African Republic are already aligned with the two commitment instruments. In 2016, a community violence reduction initiative, implemented by the International Organization for Migration under the leadership of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, provided temporary employment to approximately 2,000 ex-Séléka combatants and members of communities to which they returned. In addition, the Fund supported the restoration of public security and basic services, including the rehabilitation and equipping of administrative buildings, in the

prefectures of Obo and Birao. An important package of support from the Peacebuilding Fund for fighting impunity, reforming the security sector and promoting political dialogue will be rolled out soon to help kick-start the implementation of the national plan and the Cadre d'engagement.

Finally, I would like to stress the importance of communication and note that, unfortunately, the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and its configurations is not receiving the attention that should or could be given to them. For example, at the latest configuration meeting on 16 March, at which the President of the Central African Republic was present, only one photo was published on the United Nations peacebuilding Twitter account reporting the President's presence at a meeting of the Commission. It is important that the activities of the Commission and its configurations be shared with the general public in order to compensate for the Commission's lack of visibility and to increase the attention given to its activities and its many accomplishments.

I cannot conclude my remarks without congratulating the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission on his dedication and efforts, as well as the Chairs of the country-specific configurations of the Commission, for their efforts and support. My sincere thanks also go to the Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic to the United Nations; to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga and his team; to the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, my friend Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco; and to the entire support team of the Peacebuilding Commission, which in spite of the limited means at their disposal are working selflessly to carry out their tasks, and I congratulate them.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala thanks Secretary-General António Guterres and the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for the submission of the reports before us. We also thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this debate.

My delegation is pleased to note that, with the submission of the reports of the Secretary-General (A/71/792) and the PBC (A/71/768), General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) on the review of the peacebuilding structure are being implemented. The General Assembly agreed by consensus — and I stress the felicitous fact that

it was by consensus — that sustainable peace should be understood as a goal and a process in order to build a common vision of society, ensuring that the needs of all sectors of the population are taken into account. This vision is inclusive and cross-cutting, as it covers activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, intensification, continuation and recurrence of conflicts.

Guatemala believes that the concept of sustainable peace assumes that it is not necessary to engage in intergovernmental negotiations to collectively define whether peacebuilding should be implemented before conflicts break out and not only during or in a post-conflict situations, since clearly what is positive and new is that we must address prevention and not the consequences of conflict. We therefore welcome any initiative aimed at strengthening the PBC, its convening and liaison role, and its partnerships with other stakeholders, including international financial institutions, in order to have a more flexible and effective Peacebuilding Commission.

My delegation welcomes the fact that the Organizational Committee has begun to consider its provisional rules of procedure and working methods in order to give it more flexibility and effectiveness in its work. We welcome the fact that the Committee has held consultations that have led to a document with applicable measures based on good practices. We therefore look forward to recommendations, which will require a more detailed debate among the members of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Considering the close links between development, peace and security and human rights, Guatemala welcomes the PBC's exploration of ways to strengthen its consultative and liaison role with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. But beyond holding debates in the Organization's various forums, we believe that the concept of sustainable peace should be implemented in accordance with the mandates of each of these forums and the indicated resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

We recognize the importance of continuing to work on the relationship between peace and development, as different forums have emphasized the investment in prevention implicit in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is key to carrying out the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and vice versa, since the 2030 Agenda

as a whole can contribute to sustaining peace before, during and after conflicts.

We recall that, despite our concern about the low level of funding, the Peacebuilding Fund has achieved remarkable achievements in 2016, including the goal established in the Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding by allocating 15 per cent of resources to women's empowerment. In that connection, Guatemala is one of the countries that has benefited from that Fund in previous years. In September 2016, the Peacebuilding Fund approved a project to strengthen national capacity to combat impunity by focusing on the investigative capacity of the Public Prosecutor's Office in cases involving illegal groups, clandestine organizations and in cases of femicide and corruption. In addition, at the end of 2016, a second phase of investment totalling \$9 million was approved. It focuses on transitional justice, including support for indigenous women who have survived gender violence and institutional dialogue on conflict.

Finally, Guatemala endorses the statement made by the Secretary-General in his report, warning that, in order to consolidate peace and stability at the national level, it is important to promote good governance, democracy and accountability. The joint effort of the Government of Guatemala and the United Nations has been fruitful and reflected in the strategic coordination between justice-sector institutions and the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala. That joint effort has had favourable results, such as with regard to the strengthening of the rule of law and justice-sector institutions and enhancing peaceful coexistence.

Mr. Lal (India): Today's debate is the first such annual review since the adoption last year of the substantively identical resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016) by the General Assembly and the Security Council, respectively, on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. Those resolutions defined the concept of sustaining peace, besides calling for the strengthening of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in various ways.

The report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/71/768) provides a useful account of the activities of the Commission over the past year. We thank the Secretary-General for his report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/71/792), which gives a good overview of the Fund's situation and projects.

The complex and interlinked nature of various aspects of building and sustaining peace are now beginning to become much better understood. The perspective is increasingly expanding across the spectrum from prevention to resolution and reconciliation to recovery and reconstruction and the prevention of a relapse of conflict. The changing nature of conflict itself is evermore clear. Conflicts are increasingly intra-State and also involve non-State actors, including international terrorist networks. In an interdependent world, conflicts in any part of the world have much wider implications through such terrorist networks or large movements of refugees. We therefore have a collective interest in building and sustaining peace.

There is a clear recognition of the importance of comprehensive sustainable development, inclusive economic growth and political processes in preventing conflict, as well as of undertaking effective peacebuilding efforts. That also tells us the importance of long-term commitment and sustained investment, including vastly expanded funding, which are required for all-round development and inclusive political dialogue for building and sustaining peace.

While those complexities and interlinkages are much more widely understood, there is little political commitment for commensurate action and substantive support to peacebuilding efforts. The funding available for such efforts remains marginal, severely limiting the ability of the Peacebuilding Commission. As has been pointed out on earlier occasions, there is no agreement, even on increasing the funding for the Peacebuilding Commission to a 1 per cent level of that for peacekeeping operations annually. In the absence of funds, despite an understanding of the task at hand, there is little hope of its being achieved. At the same time, there are tendencies to reallocate the already grossly inadequate international development cooperation funds to humanitarian and other emergency assistance, further reducing overall development funding. That is not helping the longer-term development efforts required for peacebuilding.

As the report of the Secretary-General notes, the Peacebuilding Fund's financial health remains in question. The total amount of \$71 million allocated in 2016 for 17 countries, including the six where the Peacebuilding Commission is active, is grossly inadequate for the scale of the tasks at hand. Despite the landmark resolutions adopted by the General Assembly

and the Security Council, the ministerial-level pledging conference in September last year could elicit only half of the \$300 million goal that had been projected as the minimum amount needed to sustain operations for three years. India was among the countries that made a financial contribution.

In the context of these serious chronic constraints, the report of the Commission provides a useful account of its activities over the past year relating to six African nations. We welcome the efforts undertaken by the Commission to assist political reconciliation, build capacity in specific sectors, encourage donor funding, provide advice during the drawdown of peacekeeping operations and liaise with regional entities, such as the African Union, the East African Community and the Community of West African States. The deliberations conducted in different regions on cross-cutting issues and cross-border challenges, including issues relating to women and youth, are also important. Equally important is the Commission's engagement with the World Bank and other international financial institutions. We note that last year, 20 per cent of peacebuilding funds were allocated to women's empowerment and that the Fund launched its first-ever youth promotion initiative. The cross-border efforts of the Fund and its partnership with regional organizations and other multilateral funds are positive steps.

The complexity of peacebuilding activities also points to the need for greater coherence, not only among various United Nations organs but also among related agencies and special and regional bodies. It is equally important that the Commission continue to discuss ways to ensure stronger synergies between the Commission and the Fund. It is essential for peacebuilding efforts to be aligned with national priorities and participation. That would ensure sustainable gains and ownership. India continues to expand its development cooperation initiatives with a large number of partners, including those in Africa. They range from education to skill development, capacity-building in terms of institutional strengths, technology collaboration in varied areas, from agriculture to digital technologies for economic growth and sustainable development.

The High-level Dialogue on Building Sustainable Peace for All, convened by the President of the General Assembly in January, was an important step in garnering support for the issue and in exploring the synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustaining peace. India participated actively in the

dialogue. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission since its inception, India stands ready to strengthen the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

Mr. Shingiro (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking you, Sir, for convening today's joint debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/71/768) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/71/792).

As we all know, the Peacebuilding Commission was created simultaneously by resolutions 60/180 and 1645 (2005) of the General Assembly and the Security Council, respectively, to achieve the very ambitious goal of bringing together all those interested in marshalling resources to assist States in post-conflict situations so that they no longer fall victim to violence, and to put forward integrated strategies for peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, *inter alia*. The Assembly will also recall that one of the flagship objectives of the new Commission was to identify best practices and to assist in obtaining predictable funding for the first set of social and community rehabilitation activities and to extend the time frame for the international community's post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Without providing details about the activities of the Commission during its tenth session, which are well outlined in the reports being considered today, my delegation would like to say a few words about some of the salient aspects of the report. I will of course refer to my country, Burundi, which, as the Assembly knows, has been on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda since 2006.

With regard to peacebuilding and sustaining peace and opportunities and challenges, I am pleased to recall that, on 27 April 2016, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted identical substantive resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. In particular, the resolutions called on the PBC to evaluate the progress made in implementing provisions relating to its working methods and its provisional rules of procedure, while encouraging that consideration be given to the possibility of diversifying its working methods so as to increase the efficiency and flexibility of efforts to sustain peace.

The Assembly will also recall that the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council define sustaining peace as a goal and a process for developing a shared vision of society that takes into account the needs of all groups within the population, as well as activities to prevent the emergence, intensification,

continuance or recurrence of conflicts, and to address their root causes in order to help parties to end hostilities, ensure national reconciliation and embark decisively on the path of sustainable development. In addition, in the resolutions the General Assembly and the Security Council also requested the strengthening of the Commission itself, and, above and beyond its country-specific activities, of its role as a common space for all relevant actors, its liaison functions and its partnerships with other stakeholders, including international financial institutions. They also called for improved intergovernmental cohesion and partnerships, as well as coherent policies and operations.

With regard to the implementation of the resolutions, we welcome the fact that the Commission has continued to take action on the situation in Burundi. Since the outbreak of the political crisis in Burundi in 2015 until the recent return to normalcy, the Commission has tried, as far as possible, to continue to assist the Burundian population at a particularly difficult time. During his visits to Burundi and the region, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, His Excellency Ambassador Jürg Lauber, worked with national authorities and stakeholders to encourage Burundians to find a peaceful solution to the crisis with the assistance of regional and international partners, such as the African Union, the East African Community and neighbouring countries.

During his two visits to Burundi and the region, the Chair of the configuration also met with Tanzanian authorities, our immediate neighbours, representatives of the African Union and the lead mediator of the East African Community, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, to stress the importance of a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding based on the three pillars of the United Nations system, as described in particular in resolution 60/251.

We also welcome the fact that the Burundi configuration has moved away from the political debate that seemed to dominate all meetings, to focus now on discussions on the economic implications of the 2015 political crisis in Burundi, through consultations in Geneva on the country's socioeconomic situation and briefings with officials of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, Government departments responsible for economy and finance and representatives of the private sector in Burundi, which

are focused on relations between the Government and its international partners.

We encourage the configuration to move forward by properly playing its role as a bridge between Burundi and its partners, some of whom disengaged in 2015, following a misreading of the political situation in 2015. Today the Government of Burundi has a genuine desire to rebuild trust with its bilateral and multilateral partners. It is imperative that the configuration step up its efforts by embracing the willingness of the Government and its partners to open a new chapter after 2015, in order to encourage the resumption of cooperation in the areas that were highlighted in Geneva, such as education, health, food security, macroeconomic recovery and direct budgetary support.

With regard to regional issues, my delegation is encouraged by the fact that the Commission has continued to exercise flexibility and to rely on its Organizational Committee to plan debates on specific regions, countries or themes in support of the countries of the regions concerned in order to achieve lasting peace and to stress the need to further strengthen their partnership with the Commission. My delegation takes this opportunity once again to emphasize the importance of the regional dimension in the process of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The Commission is uniquely positioned to promote greater harmony among the subregional, regional, continental and international dimensions of the post-conflict response. The Commission's experience in Burundi has served to confirm that greater regional and subregional coherence is a key factor in supporting peacebuilding efforts. It is essential to continue to integrate and strengthen regional and subregional opportunities in the work of the Commission.

The experience of countries on the Commission's agenda over the past decade serves to underscore the relevance of the regional dimension. Indeed, many countries may prefer to receive assistance and advice from countries in their own regions, and regional organizations may be in a better position to respond in a timely manner and assist in decision-making in order to find solutions to sensitive issues. We welcome the fact that, during the reporting period, the Commission placed greater emphasis on the importance of strengthening regional coherence, which is essential to helping countries to maintain peace and to prevent them from falling victim to violence.

The political situation in Burundi in 2015 highlighted the fundamental role that neighbouring countries, the African Union and subregional organizations, such as the East African Community, can and should play as key partners in political processes and in combating factors that cause instability. The Commission therefore needs to further strengthen its collaboration with its African membership, in particular the immediate neighbours of the countries included on its agenda, the immediate neighbours of the countries of the East African Community, in the case of Burundi, and all of the countries involved in various peace agreement negotiations, as in the case of Burundi and South Africa.

Although the regional dimension was the focus during the period under review, at times, we have realized that it has not been wholly considered and that there is still room for improvement. At times, we have noted a real and profound gap between subregional and continental positions, on the one hand, and those of some non-African stakeholders here at United Nations Headquarters, on the other hand, with regard to reading the political situation in Burundi.

Logically, the United Nations and other partners outside the continent should fully align themselves with the positions of regional actors, who are better acquainted with the political history and culture of the countries concerned. For example, the most recent report of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the situation in Burundi was diametrically opposed to all the reports on the very same situation from subregional organizations, such as the East African Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. The first report was politically motivated and very alarmist on almost every point, while the second noted that there had been significant progress on the ground and acknowledged a few challenges that still needed to be addressed. The approach of analysing the same situation in different ways for the same period is far removed from the overall cohesion that we would like to strengthen within the Commission.

With regard to cross-cutting issues, my delegation welcomes ongoing meetings on the financing of peacebuilding, which began in 2015, in line with the Commission's founding resolutions. It should continue to address the issue of peacebuilding funding because, without the predictable resources required to finance and sustain quick-impact projects, all efforts to build peace could be thwarted. We are deeply concerned

that, despite the expressions of support and interest from several Member States involved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, the financial situation of the Peacebuilding Fund remains very fragile. The \$152 million promised at the pledging conference in September 2016 is grossly insufficient to meet the growing assistance needs, which have reached unprecedented levels in recent years. We therefore call for international solidarity to finance the Peacebuilding Fund.

In the context of the implementation of Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, it is encouraging to see the Commission increasingly consider, in particular at its open debates, how young people can contribute to peacebuilding. The issue of massive investment in young people must remain at the centre of the Commission's priorities in order to find an alternative to violence. The Government of Burundi attaches great importance to young people, who seek to become agents for peace and development. It is against that backdrop that Burundi's most senior officials have since this morning been taking part in the 2017 National Youth Conference being held in the centre of the country.

With regard to women participating in politics in post-conflict periods, it is essential to consider the gender dimension of peacebuilding and accord it special attention and unwavering commitment. To start on the right foot, we believe that women must be allowed to participate in the process of conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of conflict, take part in peace negotiations and be part of the post-conflict transition process. That is even more beneficial and politically cost-effective because there is a clear link between women playing a genuine role in such activities and the effectiveness and long-term viability of such activities.

With respect to the synergy between the PBC and the main bodies of the General Assembly, my delegation welcomes the fact that throughout the tenth session the Commission has continued to explore ways to strengthen its consultative and bridge-building role with the General Assembly and the Security Council, first and foremost during the high-level thematic debate on the United Nations, peace and security convened by the President of the General Assembly on 10 and 11 May 2016. It is up to us to build on the current momentum in order to improve the synergy between the Commission and the principal bodies of the General Assembly. In that regard, my delegation encourages the participation

of the Chairs of the country-specific configurations, not only at the briefings of the Security Council on the situation of the countries concerned, but also in the closed consultations that are often held following public briefings. Their contribution would be of great assistance to the Security Council, which would then be able to rely on sources of information other than the briefings of the Secretariat alone.

I cannot conclude my remarks without saying a few words about the importance of respecting national ownership in everything we do. Since the Commission was established, in 2005, the Governments of the countries on the agenda have been responsible for identifying the national priorities that could be addressed by peacebuilding projects. Nonetheless, 12 years later, we can still say that there are opportunities to do even more. Let us take the example of the political situation in Burundi. Some partners are quick to speak on issues that fall exclusively within the sovereign responsibility of the country. We must let the peoples of the world, the peoples of Africa and peoples elsewhere decide their own futures. The role of the international community should be limited solely to lending support through mutually beneficial partnerships.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Ambassador Macharia Kamau of Kenya and Ambassador Cho Tae-yul of the Republic of Korea for their statements, respectively, on the report (A/71/768) of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and on the report (A/71/792) on the Peacebuilding Fund. In particular, we thank Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco and his team for their excellent work on this issue.

The year 2016 was particularly important for the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. Although at the time my country was not a member of the Commission, it had an opportunity to actively engage in discussions on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as in negotiations on the parallel resolutions of the Security Council and the Assembly General on the peacebuilding architecture and sustainable peace, which sparked new momentum in the Commission's work.

Since last January, we have participated in the PBC as a member of the Economic and Social Council, and have seen changes in its dynamics and approach to its work. Those changes were inspired by the findings, good practices and suggestions on working methods

included in the report presented today, which have our full support. In that regard, we welcome the quest for more flexible ways of fostering relations between the PBC and countries and regional organizations. Recent meetings on the Sahel and the Gambia are encouraging in that regard. The PBC is a platform that should be used in a dynamic and more extensive way in order to support countries and interested regional organizations in implementing their own peacebuilding priorities.

Peacebuilding activities must be the subject of adequate, predictable and sustainable funding. In that regard, based on the requests in the parallel resolutions on sustainable peace, we await the alternatives to be submitted by the Secretary-General ahead of the high-level meeting scheduled for the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. In addition, we reiterate our support for the recommendation to be made in due course by the Advisory Group of Experts on the Peacebuilding Architecture to allocate the sum of \$100 million per year to the Peacebuilding Fund in assessed contributions to the Organization's budget. That is the minimum financial commitment that we should be willing to offer in that regard, as that sum is insufficient for meeting the sheer magnitude of peacebuilding efforts. Because we believe that that is imminent, last year Argentina began to participate as a voluntary contributor to the Fund.

The Organization is at a critical juncture for the practical implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the principles of the relevant resolutions on peacekeeping — a critical juncture that calls on the PBC to thoroughly implement its mandate, including, as we have said, a flexibility that allows going beyond regional configurations. As reflected in the annual reports presented at this joint debate, the resolutions mentioned bestow an important role to the Peacebuilding Commission and encourage it to be more effective, flexible and innovative, while also emphasizing its function as a bridge and enabler of consultations linking the work of the Organization concerning peace and security and those devoted to development, human rights and humanitarian assistance. In particular, we believe that the Commission can play an active role in supporting the Security Council in designing and evaluating mandates for peacekeeping operations, especially with regard to discussions on transitions towards missions and processes more tied to peacebuilding activities, for example, with regard to determining the level of resources for quick-impact

projects or the aspects and tasks of the civil-affairs component of missions. We also believe that it can support the Economic and Social Council in monitoring compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals by conflict-affected countries.

In conclusion, we express our commitment to continue to work to help the PBC and Peacebuilding Fund take on an increasingly relevant role as instruments for conflict prevention as well as for peacebuilding and sustainable peace.

Mr. Giacomelli da Silva (Brazil): I thank the President for convening this joint debate to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/71/792) and the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) (A/71/768).

A year after the conclusion of the review of the peacebuilding architecture, today's debate is an opportunity to take stock of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016). As a remarkable achievement in the area of peace and security in recent years, the adoption of those resolutions is in line with the priority accorded by Secretary-General António Guterres to peace and prevention. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace can play a key role in turning that priority into reality. The resolutions strengthened the bridging role of the PBC, while taking into account the part it can play in helping to transcend the divisions among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

Marking an evolution in relation to the original paradigm of peacebuilding, the concept of sustaining peace can contribute to enhancing our capacity to address what the Secretary-General identified as one of the most serious shortcomings of the international community — its inability to prevent crises. Therefore, we have to work to strengthen the concept of sustaining peace as a goal and a process aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation or recurrence of conflict. In doing so, we should not lose sight of our shared responsibility and the need for a unified approach through all three pillars of the United Nations.

My delegation expresses its gratitude for the excellent work carried out by Ambassador Macharia Kamau of Kenya as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. We would like to highlight, for instance, the efforts to strengthen the partnership between the Commission and regional and subregional organizations,

especially the African Union. We welcome, as well, the integration of a gender perspective into the work of the Commission through the adoption of its gender strategy. The Commission has also enhanced its coordination with the Security Council. The PBC continued to explore ways to enhance its advisory role to the Council by means of consultations, periodic stocktaking and formal briefings on country-specific and thematic issues. It is also of the utmost importance that all members of the Security Council contribute to the promotion of sustaining peace.

As the Secretary-General reminded us, the financial health of the Peacebuilding Fund remains in question, while the demand for its assistance has increased to historic levels. It is true that the peacekeeping budget has allocated resources to programmatic activities and that the United Nations development system has supported peacebuilding activities in countries affected by conflict. There have also been efforts to enhance cooperation with international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank. Nevertheless, resources from the United Nations regular budget are vital for the promotion of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, which cannot rely only on voluntary contributions. Predictable funding is a prerequisite for supporting policies, such as on sustained economic growth, poverty eradication, social development, sustainable development, national reconciliation and the establishment of accountable institutions. In that regard, we look forward to the Secretary-General's report on options to increase, restructure and better prioritize funding allocated to peacebuilding activities, including through assessed contributions.

The Peacebuilding Commission should contribute to this debate by holding meetings on financing peacebuilding and sustaining peace, as well as briefings on the state of affairs of the Secretary-General's report. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of focal points and look forward to discussing that issue within the framework of the PBC.

We would like to express our full confidence in the work of Ambassador Cho Tae-yul of the Republic of Korea in the implementation of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. We concur with the strategies that he identified earlier in his statement of intent, in particular the need to mainstream the sustaining-peace agenda throughout the United Nations system and to redouble our efforts to ensure predictable financing for peacebuilding. Brazil is

committed to sustaining peace and the implementation of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. We are ready to work for the enhancement of the United Nations engagement with peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Mrs. Gregoire-Van-Haaren (Netherlands): The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes this joint debate, as well as the report (A/71/768) of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on its tenth session and the report (A/71/792) of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

We align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

I appreciate this opportunity to speak and to reiterate the commitment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. We believe that the United Nations has a central role to play when it comes to peacebuilding. For that reason, we have actively participated in the PBC Organizational Committee and the Burundi configuration for many years. Moreover, the Netherlands also continues to be a top donor to the Peacebuilding Fund. Today I would like to focus on three points, namely, our appreciation for the reports under discussion, the importance of the sustaining-peace and United Nations reform agenda, and the question of financing.

The two annual reports under discussion today are both important and comprehensive documents. We particularly welcome the recommendations, good practices and lessons learned, as they offer concrete suggestions to further improve the impact of the work of both the PBC and the PBF. We would like to thank Ambassador Macharia Kamau of Kenya for his dedication and achievements as last year's Chair of the PBC. We would also like to thank all the Chairs of the country-specific configurations for their work, in particular Ambassador Lauber of Switzerland for his efforts in the Burundi configuration, in which dialogue is maintained under difficult circumstances. The Netherlands welcomes the PBC's work on the implementation of the recommendations from the review of the peacebuilding architecture, including on its working methods. We believe that flexible agenda-setting and working regionally are positive developments. We also welcome enhanced cooperation with the World Bank, which can lead to synergies for both organizations. Moreover, we regard the

Peacebuilding Fund as an important instrument that can be used swiftly in high-risk situations.

Secondly, last September, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bert Koenders, was one of the co-hosts of the PBF pledging conference. In his speech, he stressed that, in essence, the question is whether we are a reliable partner for people in countries affected by conflict. For that, a unified United Nations is needed, working across the pillars of the United Nations and with the “delivering as one” initiative as a key priority. We see a special role for the United Nations development agencies to contribute to peace by implementing joint assessments and planning by humanitarian and development actors; ensuring that financing is sufficiently “un-earmarked” so that there is flexibility at the country level to direct it towards the root causes of conflict; prioritizing efforts in fragile and conflict-affected countries to allocate funding and invest in human resources; and, lastly, ensuring long-term financing.

Many speakers who spoke before me emphasized the importance of the implementation of the twin resolutions concerning the review of the peacebuilding architecture — Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016). The Netherlands supports the Secretary-General in his efforts to achieve sustainable peace with an integrated approach to conflict, which is a priority for the United Nations. Action is needed and should primarily be aimed at improving results on the ground. We look forward to the Secretary-General’s proposals to restructure the peace and security architecture and his report on the implementation of the twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture at the General Assembly during its seventy-second session. We look forward to active engagement with Member States in that regard.

Lastly, I would like to stress the issue of financing for peacebuilding. Support from Member States is crucial for the Peacebuilding Fund in order to succeed in its goal of contributing to peacebuilding efforts. Sustaining peace is a core business of the United Nations, and more structural and sustainable funding is needed for that. I call on Member States to consider contributing or increasing their contribution to the PBF. Furthermore, we look forward to the Secretary-General proposing bold options in his report to increase and sustain funding for peacebuilding, including within assessed contributions.

Let me conclude by reiterating the strong support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): It is my great pleasure to address the General Assembly at this joint debate. I would like to begin by congratulating Ambassador Cho Tae-yul on assuming the chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for 2017. I would also like to thank Ambassador Macharia Kamau for Kenya’s leadership over the past year. And I thank all Chairs of the country-specific configurations for their efforts.

The year 2016 was one of review. In April, we saw the simultaneous adoption of General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), on the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. The year 2017, in turn, must be a year of implementation during which we translate the review into concrete and practical results. Japan strongly hopes that those resolutions will help the PBC diversify its working methods so as to enhance its efficiency and flexibility, expand the geographical scope of the PBC and employ its particular strength in carrying out its long-term endeavours, which lay the groundwork for sustaining peace. Japan also attaches importance to enhanced coordination and cooperation between the PBC and the Security Council.

One of the key elements of the report (A/71/768) of the PBC on its tenth session, which has just been submitted to the General Assembly, is to expand from a country-specific approach and include a thematic approach by establishing focal points. We hope that that expansive approach will revitalize the PBC and turn it into a more effective body. Japan has been appointed as the focal point for institution-building and will do its best to integrate that theme into the work of the PBC. We would like to align our work with the priorities of the Chair, and we consider it important to review our efforts, including the creation of focal points, at the end of the tenth session in order to continue improving the working methods of the PBC. We look forward to further discussion on how best to make use of focal points in various areas.

Sustaining peace requires not only strong leaders but also solid institutions in areas ranging from security and the rule of law to democracy and governance, as well as the trust of the people in those institutions. A subregional approach is often required for effective measures in areas such as border control. The focal

point for institution-building will respond to the growth of region-wide and cross-border issues that cannot be resolved by individual countries alone. We will provide opportunities to consolidate the necessary expertise and bridge peacebuilding needs with the support of bilateral and multilateral donors. Partnerships with international financial institutions such as the World Bank will enable a renewed focus on financing for peace, as laid out by the Chair.

Last week, Japan convened an interactive workshop to discuss the importance of strengthening the criminal justice system in peacebuilding. We also plan to discuss other important institutional challenges, such as border control and financial structures, later this year. We hope that those discussions will lead to concrete projects and collaboration among beneficiary countries, donors and the relevant international institutions.

Securing adequate resources for peacebuilding is crucial, and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has proved to be an important financial tool for that purpose. In recognition of the Fund's usefulness, as well as the current difficulties it faces, Japan contributed an additional \$2.5 million last month. Our total contribution has now reached \$48.5 million. Japan echoes the call in last year's resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture for other Member States to consider making voluntary contributions to the Fund.

It is critical that the PBF and PBC work in tandem to bring about maximum results with limited resources. In that regard, Japan supports Ambassador Cho Tae-yul's initiative to enhance collaboration between PBC member States and the Peacebuilding Support Office. Furthermore, widely publicizing the success stories of PBF projects around the world is key for the Fund to attract the necessary resources. In addition, the PBF can explore more innovative approaches, such as collaboration with the private sector.

Let me conclude my statement by reaffirming Japan's strong commitment to building and sustaining peace.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Ambassador Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya, for presenting the report (A/71/768) of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on its tenth session. We commend his efforts as the Chair of the PBC during the past year. China also congratulates Ambassador Cho Tae-yul, Permanent Representative of the Republic

of Korea, on his election as Chair of the PBC. We also welcome the report (A/71/792) of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) submitted by Secretary-General Guterres.

Last year, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office, as the main peacebuilding bodies, implemented in earnest the mandates of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, actively coordinated the international community's peacebuilding efforts and carried out much work in general. One year ago, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted identical resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively, on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, thereby setting a course for the United Nations peacebuilding work for the next five years. I would like to make the following observations with regard to the implementation of those 2016 resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture.

First, we should adhere to the "country-owned and country-led" principle. The countries concerned have the primary responsibility for peacebuilding. The United Nations and other peacebuilding partners should always uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. At the request of the countries concerned, and with their leadership, the United Nations and peacebuilding partners should help develop targeted peacebuilding programmes according to the real needs, development stages and priorities of those countries, assist them in strengthening capacity-building and continuously consolidating peace.

Secondly, United Nations bodies and peacebuilding partner organizations should work according to their respective mandates. The PBC should effectively play its role as an intergovernmental advisory body. The Security Council should enhance its communication with the PBC and its country-specific configurations and provide better guidance for peacebuilding. The United Nations funds and programmes as well as international financial and development institutions, such as the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, should focus on supporting developing countries, particularly conflict-affected countries, in achieving economic and social development and eliminating the root causes of conflicts like poverty.

Thirdly, regional partners should have a role to play in peacebuilding. Currently, all the countries on the agenda of the PBC are in Africa. The PBC

and its country configurations should step up their communication with African regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union (AU). The United Nations and the international community should support the AU's efforts to implement initiatives such as the African Peace and Security Architecture Roadmap 2016-2020 and Agenda 2063, so as to help Africa achieve long-term peace, stability and prosperity.

Fourthly, peacebuilding should be well integrated with conflict prevention. The 2016 resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture give greater attention to conflict prevention. Peacebuilding and conflict prevention both work towards achieving lasting peace and share the same goals. Peacebuilding and conflict-prevention efforts should be aimed at assisting the countries concerned in enhancing their capabilities in areas such as political security, economic development and social integration, so as to establish conditions for lasting peace.

Mr. Munir (Pakistan): We commend the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Cho Tae-yul, for his statement and his contribution to the work of the Commission. We also greatly appreciate Ambassador Kamau's work during the past year.

The report (A/71/768) before us provides a useful overview of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) during its tenth session and valuable action-oriented recommendations. Pakistan welcomes the report's focus on three key issues: financing for peacebuilding, the implementation of the recommendations of the peacebuilding review, and the review of the PBC's own working methods.

Since its inception, the Peacebuilding Commission has evolved in line with the changing nature of conflict and the need for the United Nations to develop appropriate and comprehensive approaches for building self-sustaining, durable peace. The review of the peacebuilding architecture led to a growing consensus around the concept of peacebuilding as an enabler of sustainable peace and development in conflict and post-conflict situations.

As a troop-contributing country and a founding member of the PBC, Pakistan has seen peacebuilding activities produce tangible results on the ground. Multidimensional peacekeeping missions, where they are deployed, implement critical peacebuilding tasks as part of their integrated mandates. As early peacebuilders, peacekeepers therefore lay the foundation of durable

peace. The bulk of peacekeeping resources today is deployed in multidimensional missions, hence the need to make them even more effective. Improving the lives of ordinary people affected by conflict is a time-tested yardstick that we can, and do, use to evaluate that important work.

With examples like the drawdown of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, we are seeing peacekeeping missions graduate to the peacebuilding phase. The advisory role of the PBC will be of particular importance during those transition phases. Our collective aim should be to prevent a relapse into conflict through capacity-building and the extension of State authority. Yet, when contemplating its role during the transition, the PBC needs to be realistic about what it can offer, since it is not present in the field and does not have an operational mandate. It has to become the medium through which the views and perspectives of all the relevant stakeholders are factored in the Security Council's decisions during such transitions. That would ensure that the transitions are grounded in country-level realities.

We believe that effective long-term peacebuilding processes require, first, early agreement on priorities and alignment of requisite resources; secondly, strengthening national ownership and capacity-development from the outset; and, thirdly, working with Member States, particularly donors, to enhance the speed, flexibility and risk tolerance of funding mechanisms.

Peacebuilding is not only a long-term and complex task, it is also an expensive one. It requires resources, both financial and human. A failure to provide adequate resources at the right time may jeopardize the entire effort. From the report (A/71/792) of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund, it is clear that there is concern about the Fund's financial health, at a time when demand for its assistance is high. It is critical that the Fund continue to search for new and innovative ways to enhance its resources. As it enters the next decade in supporting countries in their efforts to sustain peace, attracting sufficient resources will remain vital. With the anticipated transitions of peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti and Liberia, United Nations peacebuilding efforts will require adequate, predictable and sustained financing.

Peacebuilding is hard work, and it cannot happen without local political ownership. It requires

the restoration of trust between citizens and their institutions, and work to transform political processes so that conflict within societies can be managed without violence. Lasting peace cannot be imposed from the outside. It can be built only from within. The role of the Peacebuilding Commission in that endeavour will remain critical.

Mrs. Pucarinho (Portugal): I thank the President for convening this joint debate on the work of the tenth session of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). I welcome the report (A/71/768) of the PBC and that of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/71/792). This meeting offers an excellent opportunity to further discuss peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

My statement is fully aligned with the one delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union (EU).

The peacebuilding concept — introduced 25 years ago, in 1992 — has not yet been entirely fulfilled, if it ever will be. The review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture was indeed a decisive marker of progress that led to the adoption, last year, of two identical resolutions by the Assembly and by the Security Council (respectively, resolution 70/262) and resolution 2282 (2016)), which embraced the new concept of sustaining peace, which Portugal fully supports. Building on lessons learned from the past, the scope of peacebuilding has been extended to encompass every stage, from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction. It reflects a holistic approach that potentiates what we are aiming for: the achievement and maintenance of peace. There is a widespread understanding that for peacebuilding to succeed, all issues related to peace and security, sustainable development and human rights must be addressed in a symbiotic way.

As per the two reports, today only African countries are on the PBC agenda, and most PBF projects are being implemented in African countries. I recall that Africa is home to several regional and subregional organizations that work towards peace and security, including conflict prevention. The African Peace and Security Architecture has also been developed, which is an integrated structure at the continental level endowed with peacebuilding instruments. Portugal encourages the entire United Nations system, particularly the PBC and its convening power, to further explore ways to improve synergies with that African initiative.

In a broader perspective, we believe it is crucial for the United Nations to engage with relevant regional and subregional organizations worldwide in the search for complementarities in efforts and resources. We should not only take advantage of the existing structures, such as those implemented by African Peace and Security Architecture or the trilateral cooperation put in place by the United Nations, the African Union and the EU in Africa, but also enhance the capabilities of regional partners and other relevant mechanisms, many of which include security and early-warning tools.

With regard to the performance of the PBC country-specific configurations over the past year, we commend the efforts of all the configuration Chairs. There is good progress to report, even though many challenges remain to be tackled. We strongly believe that the PBC has a crucial role to play in these countries. As a new member of the Central African Republic PBC country-specific configuration, Portugal is fully committed to actively contributing to the good work of the configuration. Our participation in the configuration is based upon the participation of Portugal in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, through the provision of a rapid-reaction force, which operates without any caveats.

As a fully committed member of the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration since its inception, Portugal recognizes its increasing importance. As the country faces an ongoing political and institutional stalemate, the role of the PBC in keeping the issue under international attention, among other merits, became even more significant.

The goals of the activities of the PBC and the PBF are fully aligned with the surge in diplomacy for peace advocated by Secretary-General António Guterres. At the same time, preventing conflicts was placed at the core of the Organization's priorities by the Secretary-General, who is focusing on the peace continuum concept by developing a comprehensive, modern and effective operational peace architecture that encompasses prevention, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and long-term development. We fully support the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts in that regard and look forward to the follow-up report to the seventy-second session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the two identical resolutions and the options as to how to tackle the crucial issue of funding

the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in a more predictable and sustained way.

In conclusion, I recall that peacebuilding was initially conceived to address the gap between security and development in fragile, post-conflict countries. A basic assertion in that regard is that peacebuilding should take place at the country level. However, to be truly effective, the United Nations system must work in a more integrated, flexible and coordinated manner, and must definitely prioritize prevention and early-warning tools and signs.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President for convening this very timely joint debate. I wish to also express thanks for the presentation of both reports (A/71/768 and A/71/792).

Colombia, as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, endorses the statement made by Mr. Cho Tae-yul, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. We also endorse the statement of his predecessor Ambassador Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya. We greatly appreciate his work and tireless efforts to make the work of the Commission more visible, which helps to ensure the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

My country welcomes the presentation of both reports and, after a thorough reading, we see encouraging signs of the commitment of Member States to the advancement of the Organization and the mechanisms that allow us to make concrete progress. I would like to highlight three lessons learned, mentioned in the report, that show us the way forward.

The first is good practices on the ground. The reports insist, in one way or another, on the value of individual experiences on the ground — what works and what does not, the uniqueness of each and how better results can be obtained when the conditions specific to each situation are taken into account. Colombia is well aware of this, as our peace negotiations and the agreements resulting therefrom, and the efforts of the parties — the Government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) — took shape in the form of an innovative tripartite mechanism that responds to the concrete needs of the Colombian reality.

There are no magic formulas applicable to all circumstances, but experience has been gathered through peacekeeping and special political missions

and regional bodies. As we have heard repeatedly, experiences such as those of the African Union and the Latin American States are a substantive contributions that cannot be ignored.

The concept of building sustainable peace is of immense relevance to the Colombia of today. Our peace agreement for the termination of the oldest conflict in the American hemisphere — more than five decades long — includes a novel, tripartite and unique mechanism that the report recognizes. We are grateful for that recognition. The special political mission, together with the parties to the process — FARC and the Government — are present, with the United Nations and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The concept of sustaining peace for all, as reflected in the reports presented today, goes much further than traditional concepts of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration — the famous DDR — because it includes the transformation of rural areas and the creation of opportunities in those areas, which were the epicentre of the conflict in our case for over half a century, thereby pointing directly to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the three pillars of peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

With regard to the issue of sustainable and predictable financing, efforts to achieve sustainable peace in situations where such peace is threatened at the global level cannot be viewed as an expenditure. It is always an investment with an eye to the future of whole generations. The reports show this path in highlighting positive achievements based on approaches that could be qualified as a calculated risk and involve in peacebuilding local actors as well as the Government, and ownership of both the efforts and their results, all of which are crucial to that national activity.

In my country's experience with the special political mission, the vote of confidence for ownership, received through resolutions of the Security Council and other members of the Organization for the disbursement of resources, has always been one of the most important aspects allowing us to move forward in the quest for a stable and sustainable peace on the basis of the implementation of agreements.

The third issue I wish to discuss is cross-cutting gender issues. In my personal capacity and as Chair

of the Group of Friends for Gender Parity, which counts 107 Member States united towards that goal, I could not conclude without referring to the significant achievements of the PBC gender strategy. Thanks to this consensus strategy, last year we managed to integrate a gender dimension into Commission activities through policies designed to increase the involvement and prominence of women in positions of leadership in conflict-prevention and building of long-term peace, a goal that the Secretary-General has set for himself and the missions in the years to come.

For Colombia, in whose peace agreement victims, usually women, are at the centre, victims' participation as negotiators in the formulation and shaping of gender perspectives in the agreements reached shows the good results that are possible when the most vulnerable, namely, women, are actively incorporated in sustaining peace, the complicated efforts of which take whole generations to achieve.

As I began by saying, peace cannot be viewed as an expense. Instead, it should be seen as an investment. Let me say that peace will always be an investment that we must bet on, including in these dark times of humanitarian crises and international geopolitical tensions. In those times of darkness, the light emerges.

Mr. Ilichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the President for convening today's debate. We express our gratitude to the current and previous Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Cho Tae-yul and Ambassador Macharia Kamau, for their informative briefings and energetic efforts at the helm of the Commission.

United Nations peacebuilding support is an important tool to help States overcome the impact of conflict and prevent its recurrence. In that context, the Peacebuilding Commission plays an important role, as it is at the same time an intergovernmental consultative body on peacebuilding issues as well as a platform where its members can hear views from a broad range of invited participants regarding the issues on its agenda.

Last year was marked by a key event in the area of peacebuilding, namely, the adoption of identical resolutions by the Assembly and the Security Council on the peacebuilding architecture review (respectively, resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016)). We believe that the concrete long-term goals and objectives for peacebuilding and sustaining peace set out by the resolutions will make a positive contribution to efforts

to provide peacebuilding support to countries that require such support.

The resolutions also brought the term "sustaining peace" into broader use. That term is inextricably linked to the goals and objectives of peacebuilding. It refers to the need to achieve lasting peace by eradicating the root causes of conflict through national reconciliation and, ultimately, through recovery, reconstruction and development. In working towards implementing these objectives, it is important to be fully aware that the responsibility for peace lies with all national stakeholders, the Government, society and the private sector. Only a comprehensive, unbiased approach to providing international assistance that takes into account country-specific contexts will contribute effectively in that area.

At the same time, the principle of national ownership should invariably remain at the heart of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. National ownership means that Governments, taking into account the needs of their people, find priorities and strategies for peacebuilding. It also means that the role of the United Nations and other international stakeholders in this process is that of providing support to countries, with their consent, when needed. Such support should be based on helping affected countries build capacity to overcome and prevent a recurrence of conflict.

It is important to be aware of, and never cross, the line where assistance ceases to be a stimulating factor and becomes imposed, essentially becoming interference in the internal affairs of States. That is unacceptable. Indeed, it is external interference in State affairs, including the replacement of legitimate regimes, that has caused numerous destructive conflicts. We emphasize that no peacebuilding efforts or innovative concepts will be useful as long as there is temptation to exert pressure and affect the internal processes in a sovereign country to serve the political aims of certain actors.

Last year was a very active one for the Commission and for the Peacebuilding Fund. They have once again shown the important role that they play in advancing and implementing peacebuilding objectives. That is also evidenced by the overall improvement of Fund programme results, as well as increased effectiveness in the implementation of its core projects. That was noted in the report (A/71/792) of the Secretary-General. It was also important that most of the projects sought to

support national reconciliation, prevention and conflict resolution, and stimulate political dialogue.

We believe it is important to strengthen the interaction between the Commission and the Fund. The latter could benefit from the Commission's vast experience as well as its contacts with partners who provide financial, technical and advisory support for post-conflict States. The Fund, in turn, has shown itself to be an excellent mechanism for financing peacebuilding efforts in affected countries, and one that helps to achieve recovery and development in these countries. We believe that last year's review by the Commission of the results of the Fund's work in Kyrgyzstan is a positive example of such interaction, with the consent and participation of the host State.

We believe it is important to further strengthen the cooperation of the Commission and the Fund with regional and subregional bodies, for example the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States. In order to effectively overcome crises on the African continent, we need an approach that is based on the leadership role of Africans themselves. They should be the ones to define how to settle whatever disputes may exist, and then receive effective support from the international community.

It is also important to increase the consultative role that the PBC plays. An important step in that area could be the sharing views of host countries on their peacebuilding priorities, as well as concerns. Such interaction is especially relevant at the stage when mandates are handed over from peacekeeping operations to country teams, and when United Nations peacekeeping missions are drawing down.

In terms of the importance of financing peacebuilding projects, we believe that this is directly affected by transparency and accountability in the use of funds. We trust that the Secretary-General, in his upcoming report, will present Member States with detailed and realistic options. In our view, those options can include enhancing the Fund tool kit, as well as increasing its attractiveness to potential donors.

Ms. Amadeo (United States of America): We congratulate the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Cho Tae-yul, for his ongoing chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). We believe the PBC's year is already off to a strong start under his leadership. Let me also thank the Permanent Representative of Kenya,

Ambassador Kamau, for his excellent stewardship of the Commission last year.

Just a year ago, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted resolutions (respectively, resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016)) that introduced the concept of sustaining peace, which included a comprehensive definition of peacebuilding that goes beyond the post-conflict period and applies to all phases of conflict: before, during and after. That means that all pillars of the United Nations should be engaged in sustaining peace, including by doing more to prevent the outbreak and address the root causes of violent conflict.

The PBC has an important role in ensuring that the entire United Nations system recognizes how inextricably linked sustainable development and sustainable peace are. We have had some success. Since last April, the importance of sustaining peace and the call to link efforts to promote peace, security, development and human rights, have been reiterated time and again — most notably during the joint meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the PBC last June, and during the recent high-level dialogue on building sustainable peace for all.

The General Assembly recognized the positive role that sustainable development plays in mitigating drivers of conflict and the importance of a whole-of-system response to sustaining peace when we adopted the outcome of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review in December. The Peacebuilding Commission has begun to bring that whole-of-system approach to its country-specific configurations. Take Sierra Leone, which was one of the first countries on the Commission's agenda. Sierra Leone will hold its presidential and parliamentary elections next year, and the PBC, through the leadership of Canada, is committed to helping the Government of Sierra Leone conduct peaceful, free and fair elections.

The PBC's engagement in Liberia is another bright example of the contributions that the Commission, the Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office can make, especially when they work together with the Security Council. In December, the Security Council requested that the Secretary-General produce a peacebuilding plan to support Liberia's transition. Drafting that plan brought together the Government of Liberia, the United Nations, donors and civil society for a series of fruitful exercises that not only generated a peacebuilding plan

that was presented to the Security Council last month, but also set a precedent for similar peacebuilding work in other countries.

Let me also recognize the outstanding work of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) over the past year. We are impressed by the PBF's innovative engagement with civil society organizations to promote gender and youth initiatives, as well as by its partnership with the World Bank in the peacebuilding processes in Yemen and the Central African Republic. In its cross-border efforts along the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border and the Chad-Cameroon border, the PBF recognized an important gap in assistance, and we applaud its efforts to address them so that no one is left behind.

The United States is pleased to see that the PBF exceeded the United-Nations-wide commitment to allocate at least 15 per cent of resources to women's empowerment. With that achievement, the PBF has set an excellent example. We encourage the rest of the system to follow suit. Recognizing these successes, we can do more. In a time of greater need and limited resources, we must work together to energize the United Nations peacebuilding work. The PBC should be the linchpin that brings together United Nations bodies, Governments and other stakeholders to ensure that we are all working in a coherent and coordinated manner to build sustainable peace. In addition, we believe that the Peacebuilding Support Office, together with the Commission, can add value by articulating the underlying vision that ties together the activities on focal points. Overall, our goal is a comprehensive vision of peacebuilding, which will help the United Nations itself to integrate its work.

The PBC is well positioned to do this, and the renewed commitment by its members to engage comprehensively on peacebuilding, not just through country-specific lenses, is a step in the right direction. The PBC in particular can use Commission meetings to invite United Nations actors to brief on peacebuilding efforts, and invite representatives from

the international financial institutions, civil society and other stakeholders to take part.

We have made a good start. Outside of its country-specific configurations, the PBC has convened sessions that highlighted its value-added role in supporting United Nations agencies, Member States and international organizations. A few weeks ago, the PBC arranged a review of regional peacebuilding in the Sahel, and just yesterday hosted an informative discussion on peacebuilding in the Gambia. These define a new way of working that calls attention to the need to support countries post-conflict, stabilization, security and sustainable growth. The PBC promoted coordination between United Nations agencies, donors and the international community, and spread awareness and information about best practices. That shift is timely as we all put our heads together to determine the best way to support the Secretary-General's reform agenda. We would like to see more of this.

This may sound obvious, but we are talking about nothing less than overhauling the way the United Nations has been organized for decades. Last year, when Member States unanimously supported the sustaining peace agenda, they endorsed a new way of doing business: that to build peace, we need to break down the barriers that exist in the United Nations so that staff focused on political, security, humanitarian and development challenges all work together. To do that, we hope that the Secretary-General's review of the United Nations peace and security work will take a fresh look at the United Nations peacebuilding architecture to ensure it is as effective as possible and integrated across the United Nations development and security toolkit.

We look forward to today's debate and to continued work with all present, as well as Secretary-General Guterres, Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed and Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco, to promote sustainable peace for all.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.